

**City of Sterling Heights**  
**ETHNIC COMMUNITY COMMITTEE**

Official minutes of the Thursday, May 1, 2014 regular meeting.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mohammed Alomari  
Ike Cabase  
Ann Jerzowski  
Susan Kattula  
Doug Najor  
Andrew Pulford  
Iqbal Singh

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Sharron Allen  
Omie Brooks  
Dr. Steve Naumovski

**OFFICIALS PRESENT:**

Citizen Services Specialist Sue Giallombardo  
Community Relations Director Steve Guitar

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. Approval of Agenda: MOTION by Pulford, SECONDED by Jerzowski.  
Approved 7-0

4. Approval of Minutes: MOTION by Najor, SECONDED by Najor. Approved 7-0, as amended per Singh.

5. Communication from Citizens:

- Mrs. Jatinder Singh is in attendance; Singh was invited by Cabase. Mrs. Singh teaches adult education classes at the Sikh Temple on Dequindre. She came to America in 1996 and is involved with WISDOM, Welcoming Michigan, Macomb Literacy Partners and Catholic Services of Macomb.
- Giallombardo noted that The Source newspaper published a “thank you” Letter to the Editor which acknowledged everyone involved in making the Cultural Exchange a success and thanked them on behalf of the Ethnic Community Committee.
- Giallombardo stated that Redelia McLaurine’s mother passed away last month. McLaurine is a past member of the committee but had to resign in 2013 to care for her mother.

- Cabase stated that he stopped by the police department and talked to Sgt. Selewski, who said that he and Officer Allen enjoyed working during the Cultural Exchange.

6. Communications from the Sterling Heights Police Dept.-Sgt. Jim Selewski: None

7. Agenda

#### **A. Cultural Exchange – New date**

- Giallombardo stated that the Community Relations department would like to change the date of the Cultural Exchange to a Friday in March.
- Guitar added that the weather will be nicer and the timing will more convenient, in that there won't be as much of a rush to organize everything after the Christmas holiday.
- A discussion took place as to what date would work better.
- Pulford made a motion to permanently change the date of the Cultural Exchange to the second Friday of March, which would fall on March 13, 2015.
- Motion was SECONDED by Kattula; Approved 7-0.
- It was noted that the event will fall during Lent; an effort will be made to include more vegetarian food samples.

#### **B. 2014 Sterlingfest Participation & Schedule**

- Giallombardo asked members if they would like a table/booth at this year's Sterlingfest, to be held on July 24, 25 & 26.
- Pulford asked why the committee has a table.
- Guitar stated that it's a great event and gives the committee good exposure.
- Kattula added that the members hand out flags and sell t-shirts.
- Najor asked if there are still Ethnic Community Committee buttons available to pass out. Giallombardo said yes

8. Receipt of Correspondence: None

9. New Business:

- Guitar said that he and Giallombardo attended the Chalden Summit in April. He was very impressed with Martin Manna's presentation (Mr. Manna is the President of the Chaldean Community Foundation). Guitar suggested that the Ethnic Committee host another "Getting to Know Your Neighbor" panel and start with Manna's presentation, since the Chaldeans are such a prominent group in the city at this time.

- Pulford added that he would like to focus on other cultures as well.
- Guitar stated that Manna would give a background on the Chaldean history and their current status. Panel members would then discuss their story and experiences to hopefully continue to bridge the gap between refugees and longtime residents of the city.
- Guitar said that Councilman Taylor proposed that the city make the “Neighborhood Living Guide” available in different languages. The guide is on the city’s website and is also included in the city magazines that are mailed to each home, three times a year. The guide outlines several city ordinances pertaining to lawn care and general property maintenance and what is expected from the homeowners.
- Guitar realizes that refugees may have more pressing issues, but they do need to be educated on proper outdoor maintenance and ordinance regulations. He would like to focus on some of the more prominent foreign language groups and would like the committee to assist with translation and distribution of the material, once it is complete.
- Cabase stated that he would be willing to assist, and asked what the hand-outs would focus on.
- Guitar said they would focus on typical community standards such as grass cutting, garbage timing and restrictions, holiday decorations, etc. Guitar asked members to look through the magazine, read the guide and at some point, offer suggestions and assist with getting it to residents.
- Alomari stated that he is a member of an umbrella organization called Bridges that meets regularly with law enforcement agencies to discuss problems and offer solutions to the many problems that Arabic people face. They are currently planning a special lecture with someone from Homeland Security who will discuss problems that arise when travelling. Alomari asked if members of the committee would be interested in attending. No date has been set yet, but it will take place in Dearborn. Alomari will follow-up with the details when he receives them.

#### 10. Old Business:

- Cabase shared the details of the Breakfast of Nations event on May 7th and asked if the city could cover the cost of the \$25 tickets.
- It was decided that the budget did not allow for such events. Members are welcome to attend, but the cost of the ticket would have to be paid for personally.
- Giallombardo reminded members that Betty Rush resigned, due to health issues, so there is an opening on the committee.

#### 11. Adjournment. Meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.